

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for altering encryption status in a relational database ~~[in a continuous process, wherein at least one table of said database comprises at least one base area and at least one maintenance area]~~, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a table in said database, said table including a maintenance area and a base area, said base area having a first set of records;

copying said first set of records [all records] from said base area to said maintenance area, thereby creating, in said maintenance area, a second set of records;

in response to a user action, modifying a record in said second set of records;

~~[directing action of commands intended for said base area to said maintenance area;]~~

altering encryption status of said base area;

copying said second set of records in [all data records from] said maintenance area to said base area, thereby creating, in said base area, a third set of records; and

~~[redirecting action of commands to said base area.]~~

modifying a record in said third set of records.

2. (currently amended) ~~[A method according to]~~ The method of claim 1, wherein said step of ~~[directing]~~ modifying a record in said second set of records is implemented in a trigger which is added to said table.

3. (currently amended) ~~[A method according to claim 1]~~ The method of claim 1, wherein modifying a record in said second set of records comprises receiving said commands as data manipulation language (DML) statements.

4. (currently amended) ~~[A method according to]~~ The method of claim 1, wherein each base area in said database table ~~have~~ has a corresponding maintenance area.

5. (currently amended) [~~A method according to~~] The method of claim 1, comprising the further step of:

emptying said maintenance area.

6. (currently amended) [~~A method according to~~] The method of claim 1, comprising the further step of:

emptying said base area before said step of altering.

7. (currently amended) [~~A method according to~~] The method of claim 6, wherein said step of emptying the base area comprises the step of:

[~~updating all the records of the column with NULL.~~]

setting the value of a record in said first set of records to NULL.

8. (currently amended) [~~A method according to~~] The method of claim 1, comprising the further step of:

changing a [~~the~~] data type of said base area.

9. (currently amended) [~~A method according to~~] The method of claim 8, wherein the data type of the base [~~column~~] area is changed to [~~the~~] a data type [~~RAW~~] representing raw binary data.

10-15. (canceled)

16. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein modifying a record in said third set of records comprises receiving data manipulation language (DML) statements.

17. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein said base area comprises a first column of said table and said maintenance area comprises a second column of said table.

18. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein said step of altering encryption status of said base area comprises activating encryption means of said base area.

19. (new) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for executing the method recited in claim 1.

20. (new) A system configured to execute the method recited in claim 1.